

The next issue of CHALLENGE will appear in three weeks, after which we will resume our regular biweekly schedule.

PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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2015: YEAR OF ANTI-RACIST BATTLES

GEAR UP FOR MORE STRUGGLE



INDIA



BALTIMORE



MEXICO



MAY DAY

SEE PAGE 8

OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

★Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

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Editorial

U.S. Bosses Under Siege

Three recent events exposed the current crisis of U.S. capitalism. On December 19, the Chinese capitalist bosses accused the U.S. of a “serious military provocation” a week after a U.S. Sir Force B-52 bomber—capable of carrying long-range nuclear weapons—few within two miles of a disputed artificial island built by China in the South China Sea.

On December 21, in Afghanistan, a geopolitical linchpin for both the U.S. and Russia, six U.S. troops serving with NATO were killed by a suicide bomber in the Bagram district—an area made infamous by the torture and murders committed by U.S. military personnel at the district prison.

In Texas, the same day as the Bagram incident, a grand jury declined to indict any cops or jail guards in connection with the death of Sandra Bland, a 28-year-old Black woman found dead in her cell last summer after an arrest for allegedly failing to use her car’s turn signal.

As a high-stakes competition intensifies among the biggest imperialist rivals, the capitalist rulers of the U.S., Russia, and China, the international working class is caught in the middle. In their efforts to terrorize and divide workers in the U.S., the bosses have unleashed their racist killer cops. Meanwhile, the same U.S. bosses are faced with increasingly difficult—and deadly—choices as they struggle to prop up their declining oil empire in the Middle East.

More than ever, the international working class needs unity under the banner of the Progressive Labor Party. PLP is the only party that represents all workers, from the undocumented in New York to those fighting the UN’s imperialist occupation of Haiti to the dozens buried December 20 by a landslide of recklessly dumped construction waste in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to smash racist police state terror, racist borders and imperialist war with communist revolution.

Oil and Perpetual War

Ten thousand NATO troops are still stationed in Afghanistan. (NATO, or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is a U.S. imperialist-led international military alliance.) Twelve years after the initial U.S. invasion of Iraq, more than 3,000 U.S. ground troops, backed by civilian-killing air and drone strikes, remain there. As the U.S. rulers escalate their war against the regional imperialist Islamic State (ISIS), growing numbers of U.S. special operations forces are being deployed in northern Syria. It is more and more apparent that more troops will soon be on their way—sent to kill their class sisters and brothers and to be killed, all to protect the bosses’ profits from cheaply extracted oil.

As gutter racist Donald Trump calls for shutting down mosques and banning all Muslim workers from entering the U.S., other presidential candidates are clashing over how to counter the ISIS threat in Syria. Liberal Democrat Hillary Clinton and mainstream Republicans Marco Rubio, Jeb Bush, and Chris Christie want to escalate U.S. involvement—and help rebels fighting the Iran-backed regime of Bashar al-Assad—by establishing a no-fly zone. Phony “socialist” Democrat Bernie Sanders and right-wing Republican Ted Cruz stand opposed, arguing that regime change in Syria could have unintended consequences that might “worsen U.S. national security interests,” as Cruz put it (Bloomberg.com, 12/20/15).

In reality, the disagreement is strictly tactical. None of these candidates question U.S. imperialism or its role in the global refugee crisis. None of them would dream of advocating that the U.S. abandon the trillions invested in the region by ExxonMobil, a flagship of the main finance capital wing of U.S. capitalism. All of them recognize the strategic imperative recently outlined by Stratfor (12/15/15), a global intelligence firm:

[T]he Middle East is a strategic supplier of oil to the global market, and the critical link connecting Africa, Asia and Europe...To bring about an acceptable level of stability — or instability, from the U.S. point of view — will require the commitment of tens of thousands of personnel on the ground and in the skies above the region, for many years to come.

Liberals Are the Main Danger

Sanders’ role is to divert workers and youth from militant fightback into the passive electoral process—and ultimately to vote for Clinton, a reliable tool of the finance capitalists. Historically, the main dangers to the international working class are the liberal politicians who run as the alternative to the likes of Trump or Cruz. For example:

Liberal Democrat Franklin Roosevelt forcibly deported up to two million workers to Mexico. He forced more than 110,000 workers of Japanese descent into concentration camps during World War II, and supported the apartheid oppression of Black workers in the U.S. South (see page xxx).

Liberal Democrat Lyndon Johnson escalated the U.S. imperialist genocide in Vietnam. PLP’s predecessor, the Progressive Labor Movement, organized the first demonstration against Johnson’s war in New York City’s Times Square in 1964.

Liberal Democrat Jimmy Carter declared the imperialist “Carter Doctrine” in 1979, stating that any threat to U.S. oil interests in the Middle East would be met with a military response. A top Carter advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, wrote The Grand Chessboard, a book arguing that that control over Central Asia, including Afghanistan, was essential for U.S. imperialism.

Liberal Democrat Bill Clinton oversaw the racist destruction of welfare, the expansion of racist mass incarceration, and the intensification of police terror against Black workers. Clinton also executed the indiscriminate bombing of the former Yugoslavia in an effort to block Russian imperialist influence.

Liberal Democrat Hillary Clinton supported every one of her husband’s anti-worker atrocities, including the Iraq sanctions that slaughtered half a million children. As a U.S. senator, she voted in favor of the 2003 Iraq genocide.

Trump the Bosses With Communism!

The U.S. rulers need a president who can galvanize the entire U.S. working class to fall in line behind imperialism, or at least to neutralize any resistance against the global conflict to come. The seeming chaos of the current presidential campaign reflects the rulers’ uncertainty over who might serve them best.

For the moment, some white workers are confused about why the U.S. has a real U.S. unemployment rate of 23 percent (shadowstats.com), or why millions have lost their homes, or why wages and social services keep declining. Misled by demagogues like Trump, they fall into the trap of blaming other Black or Latin or immigrant or Muslim workers, who are even more sharply attacked by the racist bosses. What gets overlooked is the root of all workers’ problems: the capitalist profit system.

Instead of surrendering white workers to racist politicians, PLP fights to win them to communist politics and multiracial unity. Our Party fought alongside the Black workers and youth who led the multiracial, anti-racist rebellions in Ferguson and Baltimore, giving leadership and lessons to our class worldwide.

As the bosses prepare for bigger imperialist wars, the international working class needs communism—now. We will get there by smashing the mad dog racists and exposing the liberal misleaders as servants of the capitalist class. Millions of women workers, Black workers, refugees, and undocumented workers—now under the capitalists’ sharpest attack—will be our strongest leaders on the road to revolution. Won to communist ideas and to joining PLP, they will be essential in our class’s ultimate victory. Join us!🇵🇸

Worker-Student Alliance at LaGuardia Leads by Example

QUEENS, NY, December 9 — A picket line at LaGuardia Community College united professors, staff, campus workers and students to overcome a climate of fear and speak out. Members of Progressive Labor Party helped organize this alliance to expose the racist disinvestment in public education. The chant, “Students, faculty, staff unite. Same struggle, same fight!” fired up over 100 protesters who made time on the last day of classes to join the struggle.

Union members of both the Professor Staff Congress and local DC 37 (campus workers) have gone more than five years without a contract, while students have seen their tuition increase each year. Where is the money going?

In short, it’s going to make up for racist city and state budget cuts in education for mainly working-class Black, Latin, Asian, and immigrant students. In 1990, tuition covered 22 percent of total community college budgets, with the rest paid by the city and state. Now, tuition covers 45 percent of overall costs. Meanwhile, students who can’t afford college are being pushed into the military by a capitalist system that needs the working class to fight imperialist wars, not to learn. But students, faculty, and staff have had enough! We need education, not oil wars in the Middle East. We need a communist world that will value our labor and intellect not as commodities for profit, but for the good of society.

The atmosphere at LaGuardia is tense, with untenured teachers and adjuncts fearful of losing their jobs if they speak out. A recent survey found that of all CUNY faculty, those at LaGuardia overburdened by job demands outside teaching. Overworked, underpaid, untenured faculty hop from meeting to meeting to comply with administrative policies to “improve” the college. These initiatives often leave devoted faculty members with no time or energy to actually help students—or to fight back for our class. At the rally, student leaders reported intimidation from administration to discourage their involvement. For at least one student, the warnings led to a deeper commitment to this



struggle.

On the morning of the rally, College President Gail Mellow sent a long email to LaGuardia workers. It suggested that CUNY faculty should be grateful that the administration’s proposed contract did not include furlough days or increased contributions for health benefits, like SUNY’s recent sellout contract. Mellow also said:

I wanted...to remind us all about the freedom of expression. It is a hallowed tenet of our democracy, and one we should all cherish. Throughout America’s history, the ability to publicly state one’s opinion without interference is part of what makes us a great country, and I want to simply affirm and welcome the LaGuardia’s chapter efforts.

This “reminder” was a threat to silence militant fightback, the only way for students and staff to win anything of value. The college administration fears a

strike, but most of all they fear a multiracial worker-student alliance.

But we will not be pacified by crumbs from the bosses when we know the working class has created all value and can run the world without them. In defiance of the president’s email, students, faculty and staff shouted out for solidarity: “Tax the Rich, Not the Poor! Stop the War on CUNY!”

Students who were not yet courageous enough to stand with the picketers said they were inspired. With more struggle, those students will soon be leading the way! This is only the beginning of a long fight. Over coming months, PLP and friends need to build worker-student unity. We must raise class consciousness and win people to see that attacks by the bosses will continue as long as capitalism exists. The only way to create schools and work that meet our needs is to build a communist society. Students and workers, unite!✊

Chicago Students, Teachers Fight Back With Multiracial Unity

CHICAGO, December 15—Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) members have voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, with a 96 percent “yes” vote. For several months, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) have threatened a racist layoff of 20 percent of a workforce that serves mainly working-class Black, Latin and immigrant students. If the Illinois General Assembly fails to approve \$500 million in funding by the end of January, and the layoffs are enforced, a strike is a strong possibility.

Members and friends of the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) are in the thick of organizing and fighting with multiracial unity against these racist cutbacks.

Racist Bosses Take Aim at Students

Students in Chicago’s school system, like others with a mostly Black and Latin population, are bearing the brunt of U.S. capitalists’ sharpening imperialist rivalry with Russia and China (see page 2). The rulers need to keep our class divided, impoverished and intimidated to enable them to restore a military draft for the broader global conflict to come. The CPS slogan, “Students First,” is, in reality, “Bankers First.” The school system borrows hundreds of millions of dollars in municipal bonds, and pays back billions to the biggest banks in debt service. Meanwhile, CPS bosses claim they are too broke to pay for basic necessities for Black, Latin and immigrant students.

The CTU’s liberal leadership has fought militantly for the rank-and-file. But like all labor unions, it fights within the confines of a capitalist system that can never meet workers’ needs. By contrast, PLP’s ultimate goal is to organize a revolution to overthrow capitalism, seize state power, and create a communist society.

The capitalist class holds state power, and to end

capitalism the working class must take that power from them.

Chicago Class Struggle: School for Communism

PLers and friends organize and support anti-racist struggles within the CTU. While PLP fights within the working class to win reform demands, we also understand that a final victory can be won only by building CHALLENGE networks and a mass PLP for communist revolution. In September 2012, PLers joined Chicago’s teachers, students, parents and workers citywide in a massive, seven-day, anti-racist strike. As a result of this militancy, workers won some temporary concessions. But under capitalism, any crumbs the bosses concede are inevitably taken back. In May 2013, Chicago’s Board of Education closed 50 schools, virtually all of them in Black neighborhoods. The closures disrupted students and laid off school workers. Since then, Chicago’s working class has fought back with boldness.

CTU’s contract expired July 1, 2015. Over more than a year of negotiations, the union has put forward reform demands for fewer police in schools, smaller class sizes, racial integration, an end to over-testing, a \$15 minimum hourly wage for all CPS and vendors’ employees, and more school nurses, social workers, librarians, and services for homeless students. Union members have been emboldened by a rally of 5,000 students and workers in November, a hunger strike, demonstrations at Bank of America, and numerous walk-outs and “walk-ins” (morning rallies by staff, parents, students and community members, who then walk into the school together.)

When the Chicago police were forced to release a video of the police killing of Laquan McDonald in cold blood, the CTU leadership called on workers to support

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is a ruling-class entity whose purpose is to mold students to benefit the capitalist class while funneling public money to the banks. Students on the DuSable campus, a historically Black Chicago high school that now houses three small schools, fought back when CPS laid off the campus librarian. Hundreds of students lined the hallways for a “read-in,” and word spread citywide. Masses of workers opposed CPS, and an anonymous donor funded the position until the end of the year.

CPS budget cuts have left two of three schools without librarians. As of September 2015, only three of the predominantly Black neighborhood high schools still had one. Now there are two. The struggle will continue until librarians are permanently staffed in every school.

demonstrations against the murder and its coverup. But the CTU leaders again revealed the limits of liberalism by fixing the blame on Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Anita Alvarez, the Cook County state’s attorney and notorious defender of killer cops. They called on workers to back “better” politicians, like Hillary Clinton. As anti-racists passed a resolution in the CTU’s representative body to protesting Laquan McDonald’s killing, PLers attacked the whole racist capitalist system.

Our fight for communist revolution and to build a mass revolutionary party stands in contradiction to the union’s reliance on liberal politicians. We’ll keep organizing our friends and coworkers to keep picketing, chanting, sitting in, and marching. We are learning and fighting in the class struggle with our sisters and brothers, and building an anti-racist movement with multiracial unity and our Party’s communist vision up front.✊

CHALLENGE AS AN ORGANIZING TOOL

Need Leadership of Undocumented Workers

NEW YORK CITY, December 17 —“Capitalism is war. We have to educate the masses about [it], so they see how it’s all connected,” one worker stated.

Another said, “Bosses I’ve worked for keep saying, ‘I’ll pay you next week, there’s no money right now.’ This guy right here is owed \$2,000. We even know where the boss lives. We have to raise the consciousness of the workers.”

In response to the intensifying anti-immigrant racism inspired by U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump and others, PLers went to a local intersection to befriend mainly Latin undocumented workers and distribute CHALLENGEs in its Spanish-language edition, DESAFIO.

Every day of the year, rain or snow, up to 400 undocumented construction workers gather here at sunrise. They are mainly from Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Peru. “We go all across the city,” one of them said. “Some bosses treat us okay, others are abusive. Sometimes we get paid, or it takes months, or not at all.” The threat of cops and deportation is used to exploit and terrorize workers into accepting wretched wages.

Yesterday a PLP member distributed 30 DESAFIOs to a large group of workers, sparking a three-hour political debate. With limited Spanish, we did our best to communicate, often through pantomime. It reminded us of the importance of learning the language of the workers in the places we live. After reading the DESAFIO headline, they would tell the others, “No, take the paper, they’re against Trump!”

But soon they understood that the PLer was more than just against Trump; he was against the whole damn system.

Immigrant Wage Slavery

Attacks on undocumented workers are sharpening. Rising racism has fueled job competition and cut wages. Painting an apartment pays about \$160. “But when winter comes and your hands are shaking from standing out here from 7 a.m. until sunset, some will take anything,” one worker said. “Some do it for as low as \$70 because they need to eat. That makes it harder for the rest of us freezing alongside them to negotiate more and feed our families.”

Many also work in nearby restaurants, where bosses force them into 14- to 16-hour shifts, six days a week, for \$250 or less. “It’s brutal exploitation,” a worker said. Taking Leadership From Workers

We read the “Nuestra Lucha” (“Our Fight”) section, and the PLers shared information about reform groups

helping undocumented workers in their day-to-day lives. The workers said their immediate problem was a lack of class consciousness, and an unwillingness to hold out for higher pay for their labor. We discussed the connection between imperialism and immigration, and PLP’s struggle within the working class in 28 countries to build for communist revolution.

One worker said, “If you want to organize, you can’t just come here once, you need to build friendships and confidence. Be here tomorrow, when hundreds more of us will be here.”

The worker from Peru agreed: “I support these ideas about communism and smashing all borders. Do you know the International?”

With that, the worker and a PLer sang the International in Spanish.

Build a Base in the Working Class

We returned today with a native Spanish-speaking comrade. We made many contacts, and distributed 129 DESAFIOs in an hour. We could have distributed more! One young worker told us, “It’s getting worse with Trump. Workers born here feel bolder yelling or attacking us. The bosses treat us even worse. I think it’s related...What’s my solution? Overthrow it all—the system. Fight back. We can’t live like slaves.”

Trump is a bullhorn for the systemic racism in the U.S. that creates divisions among workers. He is thriving in the polls because his speech reflects the racist practice and ideology of capitalism. Liberal politicians like Barack Obama carry out the racism Trump spews: higher rates of deportation, more surveillance of immigrants, the closing of hospitals that serve the working class. The finance capital wing of the ruling class needs anti-Trump workers to buy into the myth of “lesser-evil” capitalists who will carry out the same racist, sexist agenda for imperialist war.

These workers want to meet with PLP to learn more about communism, and we will invite them to upcoming study groups. They will strengthen our fight with their experience and leadership, born out of hatred for capitalism and imperialism. We can learn from them as we organize students for a possible City University of New York strike in the spring (see page 3), as we bring our ideas to industrial workers, and as we build the international PLP and a worldwide communist movement against imperialism. *Los nada de hoy todo han de ser.* “We have been naught, we shall be all.” Stay tuned for struggles ahead!✊

Street Talks Reveal Protesters’ Revolutionary Side

CHICAGO, December 6 — I went downtown to the shopping district to join a march against the racist cop murder of 17 year-old Laquan McDonald and the racist cover-up by the politicians running the city. It was advertised on the evening news the day before, so it was probably being used to lead angry working class people back into the fold of pacifism and politics as usual.

Sure enough, Jesse Jackson the famous misleader was there. About 200 marched, mostly Black men and women, young and old. For a while I concentrated on being a part of the march. I am a white worker and wanted to help create a multiracial force marching down the street. The chants were fairly liberal like, “Sixteen shots, stop racist cops, “No justice, no peace, and “Rahm Emanuel [the mayor] has got to go.”

A comrade and I got out a 50 CHALLENGEs along the march and used the cover of the paper “RACIST TERROR MEANS FIGHT BACK” as a poster. We both got out 100 papers more at the closing rally of the march.

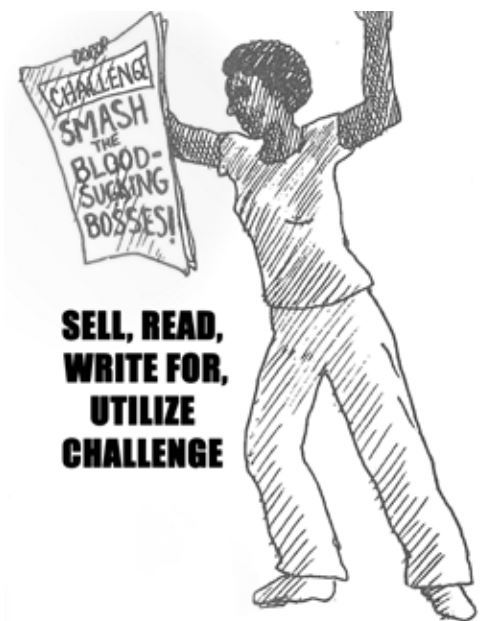
People are interested in communism. I stressed that everyone agrees it takes a community to raise a child. Then I add that it will take communism to make a world fit for everyone to live in. Both “community” and “communism” basically means the same thing: we will all pitch in and meet people’s needs.

When I told another protester it was a communist newspaper, he asked, “What was wrong with socialism?”

I showed him the sidebar on page two that says, “Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges.” We talked awhile and then I continued distributing the paper. He later returned for another paper because he had given the first one to someone else and wanted his own copy! A few people said, “Give me that CHALLENGE.”

One fellow specifically said that he was familiar with the paper. So CHALLENGE sales and everything we do for the Party does make a difference!

A young non-Black woman had made sandwiches and put them in a bag with fruit for the marchers! Free! I accepted and told her what



she was doing was what communism is all about: helping each other meet our needs. She didn’t take the paper, but it was a good feeling to see a worker being selfless to support a rally against racist murder.

Also, I met a woman whose son had been shot several times by the police on her front steps. He had survived but is disabled. She struggles with him to get up and do things for himself and not solely rely on disability benefits. I agreed that this is what is important in life — to be able to contribute to the functioning of society, in whatever manner they are able to, and tie ourselves to co-workers, friends, family and neighbors. I mentioned to her the angry young people I had met in Ferguson, MO. Their most spirited chant went, “They think it’s a joke, they think it’s a game.” These young people are angry at the endless joblessness, the few opportunities and constant harassment brought down on them, and they are supposed to sit on it and accept their fate. And the bosses and politicians play with working-class lives like it’s a game.

I told her of a PLer who had lost a nephew in a supposedly gang shooting, but he had lots of friends that came out in his support. She said that she cries for all the deaths dealt to the young people.

I invited her to a holiday gathering we were having in a few weeks. We exchanged phone numbers, shook hands, and hopefully she’ll come.

At the end, somebody called for a cheer for pacifier Jesse Jackson. It was very weak! We should cheer the workers and youth who made it out here today and want to fight for a world without racist police killings. The Party will stay in this fight-back and win some new members to a lifetime of struggle for workers’ power: communism.✊

Israeli Gas Deal Pumps Racism, Nationalism

TEL AVIV-JAFFA, November 28 — Thousands of people protested against the “great gas robbery,” a government plan to grant control of the second largest natural gas field in the Mediterranean to a handful of capitalists and exempt them from taxes or regulations.

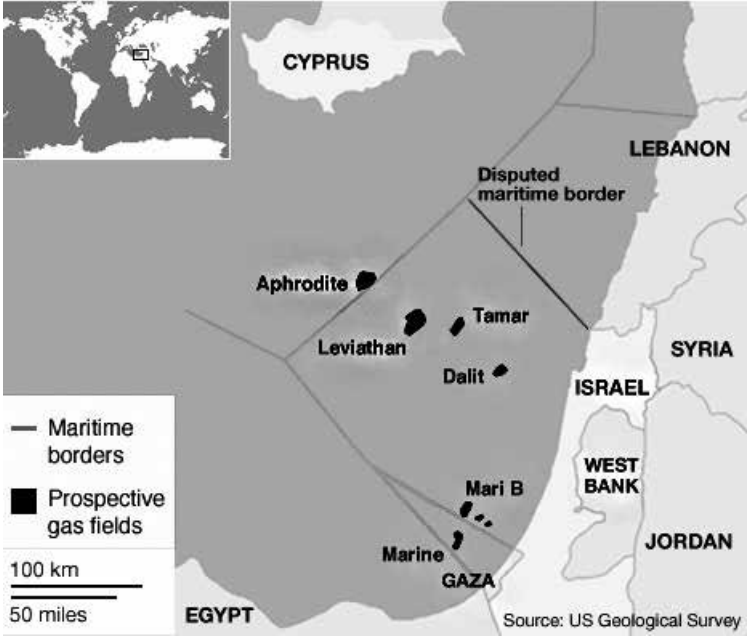
But there is one obstacle to developing the Leviathan gas field off the coast of Israel—namely Israel’s isolation in the Middle East. Its deplorable treatment of Palestinians has created many enemies, and few countries are willing to invest in critical infrastructure for potential profits. The exceptions? Noble Energy, a Texas energy company that conducted the initial exploration in 2010, is already investing in the gas reserves. In October, Russia made a deal with Israel to allow Gazprom, the mostly state-owned Russian gas company, to get in the mix. This adds another variable to the volatile competition between U.S. and Russian imperialists for control over Middle Eastern oil. But one thing is clear. Leviathan makes the region even more valuable to the imperialist powers—and more likely to trigger the next global war.

Jewish workers are demonstrating every week for regulation of the gas. Some groups want Israel to nationalize the gas field, while others are demanding limited taxes or price controls. Either way, the capitalist ruling class wins. Regardless of any controls or regulations, profits from Leviathan will be massive.

More important, the demands are racist and further divide the working class by feeding Zionism. Workers at the protests overwhelmingly wave Israeli flags and chant fascist slogans: “Left and right unite! Come together for Israel!” In reality, the politicians promoting the protests have no interest in meeting the needs of workers in Israel-Palestine. The Israeli bosses are using this struggle to promote Zionism and foster the continued exploitation of all workers, and specifically the super-exploitation of Arab, Black, and undocumented immigrant workers. Only when all workers of the world unite under the red flag of Progressive Labor Party will we be able to meet workers’ needs.

PLP’s response was to chant, “Arab, Jewish, Black and white, workers of the world unite!” We distributed CHALLENGES and fliers that exposed the dangers of Zionism and the need to fight for communism. We explained that is impossible to be “progressive” and fight for the rights of only

Gas in the eastern Mediterranean



one group of workers at the expense of another. In fact, the oppression of Arab workers allows the bosses to exploit Jewish workers and keep the brutal profit system in place. If natural gas is truly to be controlled by the working class, we must overthrow capitalism and replace it with the worldwide dictatorship of the proletariat. Communism is the only system where all workers will organize resources for the common good.✊

Communists Counter School’s Racist Lies

TEL AVIV-JAFFA, December 4 — Forgoing a chance to eat turkey on Thanksgiving and celebrate the decimation of the indigenous in the Americas, PLP members traveled to Israel-Palestine to meet with veteran and new PLP members here. One new member was a Palestinian student. He attends a private “progressive” school, where he is the only non-Jewish student in his class. He asked his teachers if he could invite us to speak to his classmates and, they said yes. What we discovered was a racist education system that eradicated the history of this region.

Teach the Youth the Truth

One visiting comrade was a recent high school graduate herself. She spoke about the racist nature of capitalism. She emphasized that like Black and Latin workers in the U.S., Palestinians and Black workers in Israel-Palestine bear the brunt of racism. But, white and Jewish workers are also exploited. These racist divisions weaken the power of the working class.

It soon became evident that the students in this private “progressive” school were lied to about the conditions in and history of Israel as much as students in public schools, where it is *illegal* to men-

tion the Nakba (the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians and destruction of over 500 villages in 1948). Not one student had ever heard of the Nakba. Not surprisingly, as the teacher said during the discussion that treatment of Palestinian workers “is not racism” but based on “truth” (read: racist stereotypes of Palestinians). Palestinians are stereotyped as animalistic and bent on killing Jews. In truth, most Palestinian families carefully teach their children to distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Society is so segregated that very few Jews and Palestinians have any contact.

We talked concretely about the history and conditions of Palestinians during the second class. We showed the maps of shrinking Palestinian territory from pre-1948 to the present. Students were surprised! After showing pictures of the destruction of Gaza last summer, we presented statistics of over 2,300 deaths, 70 percent being civilians, including many kids.

The teacher interrupted to say that Israel made no such civilian-combat distinctions since everyone was a soldier, so the statistics should be paid no mind. We proceeded to show slides about how only 20 percent of the land in the West

Bank is Palestinian controlled. Over half a million Israeli settlers now live there, and the apartheid wall and over 400 checkpoints restrict movement. That was all we had time for—the staff felt they had had enough of us.

Students were eager to learn the truth. We provided a list of websites in Hebrew where some true history could be learned. The student PL’er here can forge communist friendships with his peers.

Erasing Workers’ History

Later, we wandered around Jaffa, from which 95 percent of the Palestinian residents had been expelled in 1948 when Israel became a capitalist state. It has now been incorporated into Tel Aviv and almost completely “Judaized.” Along the new waterfront parks and shopping areas, there are historical signs. Each one explains the Turkish, then the British, and then the Jewish origins of the area. The Palestinians have been completely erased from history. Their homes and mosques have been razed. Most of the street names have been changed from Arabic to the names of Zionist “heroes” (read: war criminals). While the racist capitalist rulers erase our history, CHALLENGE can be the working

class’s paper of record, and will carry on the stories of both the brutal oppression of our class, and our class’s capacity to fight back, raise consciousness, and one day, win!

Stand Up and Fight Back

The Jamaican ska and reggae musician Jimmy Cliff sang, “stand up and fight back. You got nothing to lose...you’re the youth, you’re the change.” Progressive Labor Party fights racism and aspires to win millions of students like the one in this school to become communist organizers. Our goal is to build a multiracial movement of women and men who fight for an egalitarian communist society. The exploitation of Palestinians and Black workers have enabled the bosses to lower wages and cutback on healthcare, jobs, education, and housing for Jewish workers as well. “At least you are not Black, Muslim,” the bosses say to Jewish workers. The racism that Zionism perpetuates is to prevent workers from fighting back against their common enemy, the capitalists. Our growing Party is taking steps in this direction, organizing study groups and multiracial fightbacks among youth and workers.✊



LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Anti-Muslim Racism is Anti-Black, Anti-Arab

We the Party in Haiti discussed the last two editorials (11/25 and 12/9) and they are good. We think that we should clarify something for the working class. First, anti-Muslim racism is racism against both Black and Arab workers. Historically, many oppressed workers and youth have converted to Islam. And the imperialists from the eastern hemisphere use them to fight on the side of their own bosses against the Western imperialists. ISIS playing on workers' alienation and the anti-Muslim racism are both really an attack on the working class.

There is a more than a hint of repartitioning the small capitalist countries, whose rulers take sides, either for Russia and China or on the side of the U.S. and France.

Some oppressed workers, weakened by reformist ideas and the collapse of old communist movement in the last century, enter into the ranks of eastern terrorists against the western terrorists through the ideology of Islam.

We'd like to add something on the question of taking power and the electoral system pushed by the bourgeoisie. Democracy is an alienating doctrine in that it fools workers into thinking they can take power through taking over the government. In reality, the bosses use democracy to pacify and disarm us. They also use elections to push their capitalist ideas on the working class. Elections are also a means of sharing or dividing power among the bourgeoisie. There is a class dictatorship at play among the bourgeoisie for example, in the U.S. and in France among the openly fascists and the liberal bosses.

Here in Haiti, what's going on worldwide economically and politically really interests us. We know we should be writing more on how to strengthen our communist politics and multiply

the number of our members to build a real mass Party. We will conduct inner-Party struggle to guarantee more writing in the coming year and beyond!

★★★★★

Nationalism Hurts All Workers

I recently came back from a trip to Israel, a country built with the myth that it would be of Jews, by Jews, and for Jews where Jewish people could prosper. I know the Israeli state's existence is only possible because of the ethnic cleansing of workers in Palestine and that it is built on a foundation of anti-Arab racism. So, I expected to see non-Jewish workers and youth living in oppressive (to put it lightly) conditions. Indeed, I found this to be true.

But I didn't expect to find Jewish workers living in terrible conditions. They were living in apartments barely large enough to sleep in. They were working overtime and barely affording to pay rent and eat. I saw people sleeping in the streets, begging for money. I saw all the same things I see in the United States. Though Arab and African immigrant workers are absolutely the most oppressed and exploited, it is a myth that Jewish workers live in luxury.

Seeing this society reminded me of the conversations I have with friends about creating an "all-Black society." Many prescribe to the idea that if Black people band together to help each other and create their own society, things will be better for them. My experiences in Israel prove this ideology to be incorrect. Our unity to fight racism must be based on class, not race.

Israel is a society based on their race/religion, and it has only hurt the working class. There is still poverty, exploitation, and racism—lots of racism. Nationalism has been tried and failed many times over. It is a road to failure for the international working class. The only way to build a society that

works is to unite based on class and smash capitalism worldwide.

★★★★★

Liberal FDR's Nazi-Style Camps

In the December 23 issue of CHALLENGE, the letter "Racist FDR No Friend of Workers" did a good job of attacking president Roosevelt's image as a pro-working class president. However, it did leave out one of his most racist and fascist actions, which is especially important for us to expose in the current political climate. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, FDR issued an executive order to forcefully remove all people of Japanese descent throughout the U.S, from their homes and force them into concentration camps. They were packed twenty-five people to a room built for four, limited to 45-cents of food per day, had no plumbing, insufficient medical care leading to outbreaks of dysentery and tuberculosis, and were kept in by armed guards prepared to shoot anyone who approached the fence.

Trump's calls for the rounding-up and imprisonment of Muslim workers are no different from Roosevelt's racist attacks on Japanese workers. But make no mistake: his rhetoric is not just right-wing hysteria. Roosevelt was an epitome of the Democratic Party. Racism and fascism are essential tools of the capitalists to keep workers divided from each other and loyal to their national bosses, to see workers across the world as their enemies. It is all part of a scheme to build for imperialist war.

Therefore, it makes no difference whether a Republican or Democrat is in office, the result is the same: more racism, more exploitation, and more attacks on workers. Whether Trump or Clinton wins the election, they will both follow this long legacy. Fight racism from all of the bosses' mouth pieces!

★★★★★

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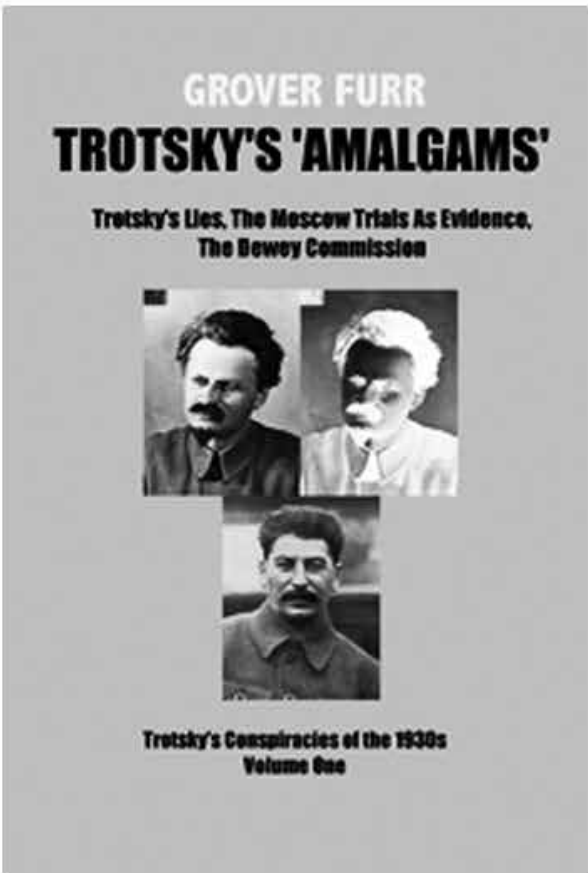
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Between Mass Struggle and Coates

Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* burst upon the public in the midst of national turmoil over racist police terror. It is a central text in the college-wide freshman seminar at Howard University, a historically Black university in Washington, DC. Coates appears regularly on MSNBC television network in connection with the Black Lives Matter movement.

But in the words of the famous dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, "What about the working class?"

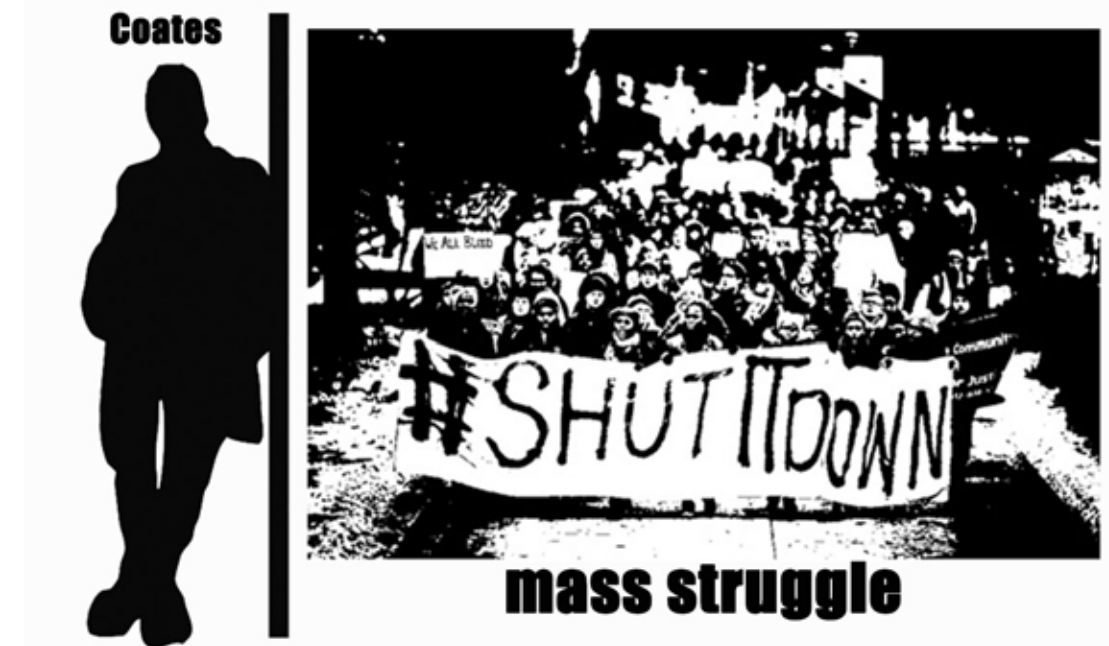
All Talk, Missing in Action

The book is written as a letter from Coates to his 15-year-old son, who was both frightened and enraged by the police murders of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown. Recounting his own struggles on the mean streets of Baltimore and as a student at Howard University and beyond, Coates meditates on what it means to be a Black male in a country founded on racism.

He stresses his own trauma after the 2000 murder of a well-off Howard student peer named Prince Jones. A Black cop named Carlton Jones (no relation) fired 16 shots; eight of them hit Prince Jones, five of them in the back. Any man marked by his "Black body," Coates concludes, is similarly vulnerable at any time.

To his credit, Coates refuses to endorse the grossly mistaken liberal notion that we are in a "post-racial" society. But in designating racism as a "majoritarian" belief, rather than a capitalist ruling-class ideology, he proposes that racism has taken on a life of its own. Coates's idealist approach — separating ideas and behaviors from their roots in political economy — makes it impossible for him to correctly analyze the fact that Jones was killed by a Black cop under the control of Black politicians. Or that the politicians are in turn controlled by the capitalist rulers who need racism to terrorize and pacify all workers. And so Prince Jones's murderer was let off the hook.

The author conveniently neglects to mention the protest movement, in which Progressive Labor Party played an important role, against the racist cop and the system that enabled and protected him. The killing garnered national attention. There were mass demonstra-



tions on the campus and in the broader community, a bus caravan of student protesters to the Fairfax County prosecutor's office, and finally a march of hundreds of students on the U.S. Justice Department to demand federal intervention (see more next issue).

Coates was absent from those protests. When he treats Jones's death in his latest book as a turning point in his own awareness of the vulnerability of Black lives, it rings hollow.

Why is Coates's book being so widely celebrated? First, because it is a timely testament to what it means to be Black in a country built on anti-Black racism. It speaks to readers enraged by the countless police killings of Black women and men. But the real reason Coates is hailed by the capitalist media is because his work breeds cynicism and inaction. He sees no escape from racism in the U.S. and so rejects the possibility of a multiracial, revolutionary strategy to defeat it. He becomes, then, a guiding spirit for the reactionary, na-

tionalist Black Lives Matter movement. He promotes no kind of fightback.

What About the Working Class?

Coates's main failing is his lack of class analysis. As a result, he cannot explain how or why the capitalist ruling class created racism to divide workers, increase profits, and prevent multiracial fightback. Racism is the foundation of capitalism. Unlike Theodore Allen, whose *Invention of the White Race* demonstrates the divide-and-conquer origins of the notion of whiteness, Coates fails to show how and why racism has always served the bosses. Communists in Progressive Labor Party need to build a class-conscious movement against racism, one that shows how all members of the working class are hurt by the violence of the capitalist state. We need a communist analysis to understand the material roots of racism in the capitalist profit system. The ruling class created racism, and the working class can abolish it! ☺



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

U.S. Special Forces specialty: torture and murder

NYT, 12/17 — Three Navy SEALs stomped on the bound Afghan detainees and dropped heavy stones on their chests....They stood on the prisoners' heads and poured bottles of water on...their faces in what ...appeared to be an improvised form of waterboarding....

A...medic...said one of them "jump-kicked this guy kneeling on the ground." Two others joined in....They beat the detainees so badly that by dusk, one would die....

The SEAL command...cleared the Team 2 members of wrongdoing....[They]...and their lieutenant have since been promoted....

Even before the beatings, some of the SEALs had...amused themselves by tossing grenades over the wall of their base, firing high-caliber weapons at passing vehicles and even aiming slingshots at children, striking them in the face....

Once militant, now millionaire

Bloomberg Business, Dec, 8-- Cyril Ramaphosa is the only serving politician in South Africa who's led both a labor union and a business empire. Now chances are rising that he'll lead the country.

The country's biggest labor group last month cautiously backed Ramaphosa to head the ruling African National Congress in two years...(he) still has to persuade the ruling party, some of whose leaders are suspicious of his wealth and pro-business leanings, that he's the right man....

In 2012, he made a failed 19.5 million-rand (15 rand = \$1) bid for a prize buffalo cow and calf at a game auction, a move opposition parties said was scandalous given that 22 percent of the population goes hungry....

What's clear is that Ramaphosa doesn't need the president's 2.75 million rand annual salary...He keeps a cattle ranch in the eastern Mpumalanga province and

is building a hillside mansion overlooking the sea in Cape Town's exclusive Fresnaye suburb...his family trust sold its 29.6 percent stake in Shanduka Group, the investment company he founded in 2001...worth 2.6 billion rand... (he) also disclosed to Parliament that he also owns 30 townhouses, two apartments and stakes in seven other companies with a nominal value of 76.6 million rand.

China: strikes, protests, wage fraud

NYT, 12/17 — ...The biggest coal company in north-eastern China announced it planned to lay off 100,000 workers....40 percent of the work force at 42 mines in four cities....

In April, even before the layoffs were announced, thousands marched on the streets of Hegang...to protest delayed salaries. The organizers were arrested and jailed.

In October, company management stifled a protest by locking workers in the mines....

...The number of strikes and labor protests nationwide nearly doubled in the first 11 months of this year, to 2,354....Strikes and workers protests hit a record high of 301 incidents last month.

Precursors to Trump's racism

El Pais (Spain) 12/9/15—US history cannot be understood without understanding the legacy of immigration...Despite this, Donald Trump's proposal is not unusual...in barring the entrance of Muslims to the US... laws have existed in the past that restrict the arrival of immigrants.

...in 1882...(the) Chinese Exclusion Act...prohibited Chinese citizens from entering the US...(and those) already in the US could not become citizens....

...the 1917 Immigration Act...required all immigrants to pass literacy tests—which mainly effected poor Catholics, Jews, and Asians—and excluded anyone born in the so called "Asian Exclusion Zone" from entering the US...

...(in order to) slow down the arrival of Eastern Europeans, congress approved a quota system in 1921, limiting immigrants from entering the US...In 1924...The system was further toughened...(until)...the law was

revised in 1952.

Imperialist wars imperil millions of babies at birth

NYT, 12/17 — Nearly 16.6 million babies were born in conflict zones this year, Unicef said....Newborns and mothers faced particularly acute risks in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan and Syria. "Every two seconds a newborn takes its first breath in the midst of conflict, often in terrifying circumstances and without access to medical care," said...Unicef's executive director.

Tuition hikes makes college prez rich

NYT, 12/7 — ...The compensation of private college presidents continues to climb....

...Among the top 10 earners in 2013, included Columbia University's Lee Bollinger... [whose] compensation totaled \$4.6 million....

Ranking second is the University of Pennsylvania's Amy Gutmann, who received just over \$3 million....

Richard Joel, president of Yeshiva University in New York, regarded as the flagship college of Modern Orthodox Judaism... [received] \$2.5 million,...notable in light of Yeshiva's ongoing financial difficulties since 2008....

In 2009, Mr. Joel announced layoffs and a hiring and pay freeze....

In all, 32 university presidents received \$1 million or more in compensation during the year....

CIA 'advisors' training killers

NYT, 12/4 — A series of home raids by CIA-trained Afghan counterterrorism forces in the last month resulted in the deaths of at least six innocent civilians....

The deaths... [in] a Nov. 20 episode [included]...a husband and wife...killed with two American advisors present. The raids were conducted by...counterterrorism pursuit teams set up by the CIA....

...On Nov. 2...operatives...raided a home...killing a 45-year-old man and his 17-year-old nephew — both described as innocent civilians by... [the] deputy to the Khost governor.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

2015 YEAR OF ADVANCING COMMUNISM, MORE STRUGGLE AHEAD

We are marching in a compact group along a steep and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have... chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now some among us begin to cry out: Let us go into the marsh!...[L]et go of our hands...[F]or we too are "free" to go where we please, free to fight not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh!

— Vladimir Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*

In 1901, when Lenin wrote these words, the Bolsheviks were a small communist party struggling to earn the leadership of the Russian working class. Revolution seemed a long way off. But between 1905 and 1914, a massive strike wave in Russia was followed by a ruling-class crackdown and then a global, inter-imperialist conflict: World War I. By 1917, these upheavals had set the stage for the world's first successful communist revolution. The revolution couldn't happen until conditions matured—but at the same time, the Bolsheviks had to be ready.

As we assess the developments of 2015 and look forward to 2016 and beyond, the task of Progressive Labor Party is to emulate the Bolsheviks. Even as we participate in reform battles, we must never retreat into "the marsh" of reformism or passivity. Our historical task is to build a mass working-class party to smash capitalism, seize state power, and establish a communist dictatorship of the working class—a society run by workers to meet workers' needs.

Worldwide, 2015 saw a sharpening of the kind of Great Power rivalries that sparked World War I and World War II. Talk of a third world war is in the air. The Russian bosses became more aggressive, projecting military power from the Ukraine to Syria. China expanded its imperialist base in the South China Sea while openly challenging U.S. hegemony in global financial markets with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The U.S. ruling class has countered with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a "free trade" agreement designed to constrain China.

In the Middle East, in an effort to consolidate control over the region's oil, the U.S. has escalated its air strikes and drone attacks, murdering uncounted civilians there. Several Republican candidates for U.S. president are now calling for a new ground invasion, this time aimed against the Islamic State, or ISIS. The U.S. rulers know they cannot protect their oil wealth without a restored military draft and a major ground invasion. They also know they cannot execute a ground war without political support from the U.S. working class—something they don't have, at least not yet.

The seeds for ISIS were planted by the desperate U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the more recent escalation of the conflict in Syria. While the small-scale terror of ISIS pales against the monumental state terror of U.S. imperialism, the

group is an extreme example of "the marsh" of religion. The ISIS bosses' "caliphate" is in fact a mini-imperialist state with its own designs on Middle East oil.

The refugee crisis caused by imperialist rivalry, and in particular by ongoing war in Syria and Afghanistan, saw workers in Europe open their doors to their working-class sisters and brothers. As the bosses resorted to open racism to deport the refugees back to misery and death, the international working class responded heroically. Workers have no borders!

Faced with the perpetual crises of capitalism, too many workers in 2015 sought answers from the "marsh" of liberal bosses. In Greece, the working class placed its hope for meaningful resistance in Syriza, a party of the so-called radical left. In reality, however, Syriza's role was to rally workers to vote before selling them out. Similar sellout, fake-leftist movements in Spain, Brazil, Venezuela and South Africa have pushed workers deeper into the jaws of capitalism.

Danger and Opportunity

In the U.S., the heart of global imperialism, 2015 saw cities rocked by anti-racist rebellion. From Baltimore to Chicago, Black youth led the way and exploded against racist police terror. Building on the Ferguson rebellion of 2014, these actions grew into a multiracial mass movement that terrified the U.S. ruling class. Calls from "the marsh" of identity politics by Black Lives Matter and others are working to undermine the revolutionary potential of this movement. PLP has championed multiracial unity in all fightback struggles, and we are growing in numbers and influence. Join us in this work in 2016!

Today the bosses are whipping up anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant racism to keep us divided and win support for the bigger wars to come. Gutter rightwing politicians like Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen dominate the capitalist media and embolden the fascist right. As the bosses' push the phony pretext of fighting "terrorism," immigrant workers suffer the brunt of racist attacks and deportations.

But the main threats to our class are not the Trumps and Le Pens. The biggest dangers are liberal capitalists like Barack Obama and Pope Francis, who deceive honest workers in the name of reform. But capitalism can never be reformed to serve workers. It can only serve profit, first and last.

Out of the Marshes, Into the Class War!

Throughout 2015, the Progressive Labor Party was in the thick of struggles in more than two dozen countries. Our Party continued to fight to organize the international working class into a mass party of millions, and to turn imperialist war into class war for communist revolution.

PL by the Numbers:
50 Years
27 Countries
5 Continents
1 Class
1 Party

PLP broke marching bans in New York City after two cops were killed there. We fought the racist expansion of Jewish settlements in Israel-Palestine. We organized teachers and students in East Africa and led mass marches against the United Nations occupation in Haiti. In Pakistan, we built leadership—with an emphasis on leadership by women—and fightback across the most vulnerable sectors of the working class.

In July we confronted the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina while exposing the capitalist-funded Black Lives Matter misleaders. In Haiti and East Africa, we exposed fake leftist politicians with a long track record of corruption. The revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party organizes the working class not to vote in some electoral charade, but to revolt. We don't settle for crumbs off the bosses' table. We organize and fight to smash this entire racist capitalist system and the imperialism, racism and sexism it relies upon.

The year 2015 also marked PLP's 50 years of waging fights for communism in schools, on the job, in the streets and the military. Our international convention in August passed the torch to a new generation of communist leaders who are mainly women and immigrant. It's revolutionizing the concept of leadership — anyone and everyone who fights in the interest of the working can be a leader. This new collective leadership further advances our fight for a mass, international communist movement. The coming year will be one of struggle inside and outside the Party to make the needs of the whole working class our top priority.

For our kids, for the victims of racist police terror, drone strikes, imperialist devastation and the refugee crisis, let's dedicate 2016 to connecting the struggles of our class worldwide to our fight for communism. Let our New Year's resolution be to attack every manifestation of capitalism. Let us resolve to join mass organizations wherever workers are fighting, and to share with them our vision for a communist world—a world free from racism, sexism, inequality, and imperialist war.✊

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